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IE TECH WEEK KEYNOTE

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Hello everyone, and thank you for having me welcome you all to the Inland Empire Tech Week. The Tech Expo today is intended to highlight the strength of the Inland Empire's technology base, and you'll surely see today just how much potential this area holds for the tech industry.

The Inland Empire has a huge advantage in being in California, and another in being so close to the nation's entertainment capital, Los Angeles. I grew up in Nebraska, where some of the chief preoccupations are corn, beef or football, and St. Louis, where it's beer and biotech and baseball. So as they say in real estate, location, location, location, and no one is more addicted to technology than Hollywood.

The problem, as I was reading recently in the LA Times, is that frequently when a Web startup gets going in Southern California, as soon as they meet some success, and need to scale up, they relocate to Silicon Valley because that's where all the talent is. The professional nerd base, as it were, is south of San Francisco, so that's where tech firms end up moving to pull their people from.

But tech succeeds down here, too, and can grow substantially because Hollywood is hooked on it. The entertainment industry perpetually needs the most cutting edge technology to help them find their talent, to capture their visuals and sound, to assemble those products and enhance them, and innovate effects and computer generated images from scratch, to manufacture and protect those properties to be compatible with a host of hardware devices, to distribute, to exhibit, broadcast, Webcast, and Mobilecast a whole world of content for television, radio, Internet and film. Without technology, the entertainment industry really doesn't exist. Or it looks like Vaudeville if it does.

But to make this area compete with the nation's tech basket up north, I think it's useful to look a bit into what made Silicon Valley into who they are now. I found a clue from, of all people, John Steinbeck. His masterwork *East of Eden* is set in the Salinas Valley, up between San Francisco and Monterey, sort of where Silicon Valley is now, in the early 20th century, before Alan Turing had ever even conceived of a computer. Steinbeck tells us this about his protagonist, Adam Trask:

...he was not alone in his preoccupation with the future. The whole valley, the whole West was that way. ... Men were notched and comfortable in the present, hard and unfruitful as

it was, but only as a doorstep into a fantastic future. Rarely did two men meet, or three stand in a bar, or a dozen gnaw tough venison in a camp, that the valley's future, paralyzing in its grandeur did not come up, not as conjecture but as a certainty.

"It'll be—who knows? Maybe in our lifetime," they said.

There were others who prophesied, with rays shining on their foreheads, about the sometime ditches that would carry water all over the valley—who knows? Maybe in our lifetime—or deep wells with steam engines to pump the water up out of the guts of the world.

Another man, but he was crazy, said that someday there'd be a way, maybe ice, maybe some other way, to get a peach like this here I got in my hand clear to Philadelphia.

In the towns they talked of sewers and inside toilets, and some already had them; and arc lights on the street corners—Salinas had those—and telephones. There wasn't any limit, no boundary at all to the future. And it would be so a man wouldn't have room to store his happiness. Contentment would flood raging down the valley like the Salinas River in March of a thirty-inch year.

I think, give or take, that pretty well describes where we are today. This would be, comparatively, like May of a thousand-inch year, with contentment raging down on us from satellite services and Internet service providers and international broadcasters onto cheap electronics manufactured overseas. We are beyond the wildest dreams, I mean manically wild, insane dreams of just a century ago. If they thought the guy who predicted refrigerated shipping was nuts, how could you even start to explain watching the Daily Show on your iPhone?

I offer this bit of literature as a roundabout way of bringing you to a well-known quote by computer scientist Alan Kay, who said, "The best way to predict the future is to invent it." Steinbeck tells us that the West was preternaturally preoccupied with the future. California, and Silicon Valley, have been predicting the future for over a century by creating it from scratch. By imagining it, constructing it, testing it, refining it, perfecting it, and selling or giving it to the rest of the world. It takes a deep-seated culture of creativity and curiosity to encourage this kind of thing, and California has it. And Inland Empire is ideally suited to predict that future by inventing it here.

But not all of us are sitting around in our garages tinkering with home brew computers, like Jobs and Wozniak did. Not many are Masters candidates at Stanford composing search algorithms like Larry and Sergei at Google were. And not everyone would know where to begin designing a business network like LinkedIn, which started in our founder's living room on Monday nights with pizza and one projector.

So it's easy for a computer scientist like Alan Kay to say "predict the future by inventing it", but what can the rest of us do? I'm a former Mac Genius, I know Adobe's Creative Suite, ProTools and Final Cut Pro, but I have no idea where to begin if I wanted to design a circuit board or write code for new software. I can barely design a usable website. So If I could amend Kay's aphorism, I'd say the best way for most of *us* to predict the future is to *adopt* it. In lieu of inventing the future, adopt the technology that describes the future you want to see. Be an early adopter with abandon, and try it all on. Try it on quickly to see what works, what doesn't work, why it doesn't work and what shows promise in its earliest forms.

Being fluent or at least familiar with the latest tools enables you to employ them in unexpected ways, particularly in the virtual sphere. Like company blogs that humanize big, faceless corporations. Or message boards that enable small communities to discuss issues virtually without a physical meeting place. Or a video stream that local law enforcement offices are using to locate suspects. Or text messaging feeds that people can subscribe to, to keep up-to-the-minute on people and topics they're interested in. All these things describe what's possible now. But it's only useful if it's adopted now.

Let me take you through a quick spin of what I've got going on in an average day's work. Usually I have at least two or three browsers open for different purposes.

Safari is quick for searches, research, news, blogs and messageboards
Firefox is secure and stable for banking, bills and posting new content
Flock is fully integrated with social networking for using Blogger, Flickr, Facebook, YouTube, MySpace, and other social media sites
IM and Skype are quick ways to manage quick communications and mass status updates

On top of those, I've got to have both of my email clients open, Entourage for my secure company mail, and Apple's Mail program for all my private POP accounts, which I can count at least seven of. All of this in addition to my creative applications that I have to run on any given day, whether it's Microsoft Office, or the Creative Suite, or Final Cut, or whatever I'm

doing that day to create content, I have all these applications going in the background to keep me connected.

You might say we're drowning in choice when it comes to communications, or perhaps, distractions. I'm pretty sure this is what Steinbeck meant about contentment raging down upon us. This is what we affectionately call Web 2.0. The hallmarks are user-generated content, social media and social networking. Being familiar with these options, and being part of the cultures and communities driving them, is what enables you to make qualified decisions when it comes time to do what you want to do, whether that's to reach out and find talent, find capital to start a new company, find the right niche to launch a product, build relationships to develop business partnerships, draw a virtual community around an existing culture, or whatever your needs are. Find your pain points, then reach out to your networks to solve them. Understanding that illuminates the business utility of Web 2.0. And being a broad adopter of social media is one of the things that found me a job at LinkedIn.

To give you a sense of the utility of LinkedIn, here's a short video about Sasha Strauss, an entrepreneur in downtown Los Angeles who built his company by using trusted recommendations on LinkedIn. Sasha never placed an ad but has hired a new employee every month since startup and has grown his profits exponentially by finding trusted business on LinkedIn:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W4nD6y-PnUY>

MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, Blogger, LinkedIn and hundreds of others all these have their place and purpose in the world of Web 2.0. I'll speak specifically to LinkedIn, which stands apart as the world's largest professional network. It enables users to see not only who they know, but who their friends know, and who their friends' friends know. And not just who they are, but where their experience and expertise lie. How well they come recommended by past colleagues and co-workers. Jon Praed just calls LinkedIn your Rolodex on steroids because it never goes out of date, it can tell you where your relationships are and search for people in your network by skill, title, company, location, industry, or keywords featured in their profile.

To take a quick look at the features of LinkedIn, I'll just pick five:

Profile – The best way to establish a professional presence online. Having a robust profile online enables you to control your place on the Web. You can't ever be sure what Google will turn up about you, but LinkedIn gives you an authoritative presence on the Internet that people

can use to find out about you. With a full profile, complete with photo, past positions, an summary of your skillset, and recommendations from trusted colleagues, people will be able to reach out to you confidently.

Status – A quick means to update your network on current projects. By updating my status to “Rob is in New York City today,” I’m inviting members of my network to reach out to me if they’re in town. By the same token, I can use status to promote current projects or good press by updating my status to include, “Rob recommends this NY Times article - <http://tinyurl.com/59y92k>” – or “Rob is enjoying the new Groups function on LinkedIn.”

Search – An expansive tool to locate resources of all kinds. This is the heart of LinkedIn: finding and connecting with the right people. Beyond the basic function of searching for someone by name, I can look for professionals by title, company, industry, geographic location, and keywords that include areas of expertise, experience, interests and honors. Whether you’re looking for an expert to answer a question, the right person at a company for a proposal, or just a connection to open a door, LinkedIn is the first place anyone should turn.

Q&A – An easy method of tapping the collective wisdom. If you’re opening new offices in Europe, you might want to know some pointers about what to look out for, as LinkedIn’s founder, Reid Hoffman, did. He used Answers to find 65 qualified responses from a network of millions, some of whom have faced that same challenge. If you have a tough question, if you need quick market research, or if you need feedback on an opportunity, posting a question is an amazing way to tap the wisdom of the greater network. In addition, posting qualified answers is a great way to attract clients. One LinkedIn user found a client worth \$250,000 by sharing his expertise via LinkedIn Answers:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=feTZWBE8QwI>

Groups – A simple aggregator of people with similar professional interests. Using groups is a great way to reach out to people who may not be in your extended network, but who have valuable experience to share. New group functions offer the ability to post news items and ask questions within a group, enabling a more targeted audience to seek answers and share news.

This is the tip of the iceberg in terms of what social media is capable of. It’s the democratization of technology that enables anyone with a computer and an Internet connection to become an expert, a contributor, and even a celebrity. Every year will bring more innovation, and the

culture that adopts them is the culture that predicts the future and prepares itself to be the early beneficiaries of what the future has to offer.

I encourage you this week to preoccupy yourself with the future, prophesy unrelentingly, and predict a future of the Inland Empire that's "paralyzing in its grandeur" – not as conjecture but as certainty. We can't all *invent* the future, but the practical accessibility of existing technology enables us to *adopt* the future we'd like to see, whatever that may be, whenever it may be. Who knows? Maybe in our lifetime.